MD Information Literacy Summit

Skills Document: Public Libraries

Group Name: Public Libraries

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Audience: Public Librarians serving Adults and Youth

Introduction/Summary and General Recommendations:

Public libraries are the single place in our society where everyone, regardless of economic or social situation, can find information, access rich collections of music, movies, books, and art, and attend enriching programs for education or entertainment throughout the entirety of their lives. Public library staff are always striving to level the playing field for equal access to information for all. Today, public libraries offer added access to technology, digital engagement, workforce development, and an ever-evolving list of services designed to meet the needs of all customers.

Public library doors are open for all. Their services are available to all ages, and those services are free. The American Library Association says, "Libraries Transform," and they truly do as they offer opportunities for enrichment, education, and engagement for individuals, families, seniors, and youth. Public libraries are a place to grow and learn; they are a place to be with others or to be alone.

Public libraries provide opportunities for lifelong learning, as well as access to quality resources which are available to customers regardless of their affiliation to any academic institutions.

With the concepts of truth, ethical journalism and even objective reality being actively challenged in American culture, it is more important than ever that libraries embrace their role, foster an informed citizenry, teach information literacy and critical thinking, and combat ignorance to the full extent of their power, as they remain the only public institution tasked with this monumental duty.

With such a wide customer base, as well as the great breadth and depth of programs and services offered, public libraries encompass many information literacy skills in their work with their customers. There is overlap in some of the information literacy skills important to develop among information seekers from the time they are in elementary school through their academic years into adulthood and lifelong learning. In this regard, public libraries remain constant

partners with their local public schools and other academic institutions to provide instructional support for learners in their formal education.

Despite this overlap, however, public libraries are more unique in two areas of information skill development: the extension of model reference behaviors into lifelong learning and the opportunity to provide early literacy skills with our youngest community members, ages 0-5. This public library framework document will look at the outcomes and activities offered by public libraries for their preschoolers and their caregivers that lead to the acquisition of early literacy skills and kindergarten readiness.

The Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) were reviewed in regards to these two information literacy skills focus areas. Specifically, the *IMLS 21st Century Skills* category, **Learning and Innovation Skills**, supports the focus area of lifelong learning. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creativity and Innovation, and Communication and Collaboration are all applicable sub-skills of thi*s 21st Century Skills* category. Overall information literacy skills (e.g Access and Evaluate Information, Use and Manage Information) fall under IMLS's category, **Information, Media and Technology Skills**. This framework's lifelong goal that encompasses personal information needs (e.g. Health Literacy, Financial Literacy) supports IMLS's 21st Century Themes. Emergent literacy skills fall within the *21st Century Skills* category, **Basic Literacy**.

Ongoing Professional Development

As the information and media literacy landscape changes faster than ever, library professionals cannot rely solely on skills learned decades or even months ago. Staff must regularly reassess their skills to determine if they still meet current information literacy needs, and seek training or other information as necessary. Training should be sought on an ongoing basis and made available to library staff in these areas:

- Model reference behaviors/reference interview
- Media/information literacy
- Social media literacy
- Effective search strategy/search engine relevancy rankings
- Identifying authority and bias online
- Identifying primary sources and understanding research methodology
- Online safety/privacy issues

Resources may include:

- Newly published books or articles addressing the topics above.
- Training and conferences offered at the system, state (SLRC) or national (ALA) level.
- Online courses though Lynda, EdEx, Infopeople or other digital learning media.
- Non-library/education specific training from organizations like the Newseum, etc.
- Collaborative discussion in online forums/email listservs

Learning Outcomes and Related Learning Activities/Examples:

Lifelong Learning Outcomes

Outcome 1: Information literate individuals will have the ability to navigate the constantly changing information environment.

Activities:

- Customers will be aware of services and resources that guide them to new information resources and technologies.
- Customers will be able to choose the appropriate information format that responds to their information need.
- Customers will determine the level of need for assistance required from library staff.

Outcome 2: Information literate individuals will develop information retrieval skills applicable to multiple formats.

 Activities:

- Customers will understand the organizational structure of multiple information formats.
- Customers will be able to hone their information seeking skills by observing the process librarians follow to assist them with their questions.

Outcome 3: Information literate individuals will develop a strategy for evaluating information for clarity, validity, and usefulness from traditional and unfiltered sources.

Activities:

- Customers will be able to evaluate the credibility of a source by reviewing the basis of the information and its origin.
- Customers will be able to read beyond a title or headline by reviewing the information's supporting sources and their currency.
- Customers will be able to filter out personal biases in their evaluation of information resources.
- Customers will be able to recognize author bias in information and media.
- Customers will be aware of the need to seek additional resources to provide alternative viewpoints.
- Customers will understand how information graphics are a key to efficiently determining the relevancy of a resource and to meeting information needs.
- Customers will know when the assistance of an information professional is needed.

Outcome 4: Information literate individuals will understand the power of information and its application to all stages of life.

Activities:

- Customers will be able to fulfill personal information needs regardless of their stage in life and when the need exists:
    - Workforce and Career Development
    - Personal Educational Development
    - Do It Yourself
    - Digital Citizenship, Privacy and Online Security
    - Cultural Literacy
    - Personal Inquiry
    - Financial Literacy
    - Health Literacy

Organized programs or workshops, interest groups, and training on specific programs and searching techniques would be well received and fulfill a need for library users otherwise not reached by formal education programs. In areas where schools provide little Internet training, public librarians may choose to offer information literacy programs to children and young adults.

Emergent Literacy Outcomes

Outcome 1: Caregivers (e.g. parents, family members, daycare teachers) of emergent literate children will understand the importance of early learning programs.

Activities:

- Caregivers will attend and participate with their children in library-related early learning programs.
- Caregivers will actively engage with their children through activities such as reading books and rhymes aloud and discussing what they are reading
- Caregivers will model the importance of reading through their own reading and regular library visits where they and their children browse, read, discuss, and select books and other materials to take home

Outcome 2: The emergent literate child (ages 0-5) demonstrates early learning
literacy skills (e.g. singing, talking, reading, writing, playing, active listening, active engagement in rhymes, familiarity with alphabet, sounding).

Activities:
- Children will participate in preschool programs such as storytimes.
- Children will demonstrate active listening skills during preschool programs.
- Children will engage in the activities of preschool programs.
- Children will select books of interest to them and interact with them.

Children and Youth Services librarians working to achieve these outcomes should refer to the *Every Child Ready to Read*, 2nd edition curriculum as well as the The Public Library Association (PLA) and Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) recently released *Every Child Ready to Read® (ECRR) @ your library® Toolkit for Serving Early Childhood Educators*. This digital toolkit serves as a how-to manual to train early childhood educators, including public librarians, licensed home child care providers, child care center staff, Head Start teachers, preschool teachers and other child care professionals. The Toolkit provides training that equips public librarians to more effectively partner, train, and facilitate learning with early childhood educators whose students are growing in independence and ability as they approach school entry.

The Standards contained in the Language & Literacy Domain of the *Maryland Early Learning Standards* should be used as a key reference by librarians and caregivers of preschoolers. The standards of all three Strands of this Domain (Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, and Reading Foundational Skills) all contain key, early learning outcomes to be achieved by children in their 1 Year -- 4 Year timespan which can be supported in public library programs.

Standard:* "Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text."

*Example from Language & Literacy Domain/Strand: Reading Literature Standard from *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age* and the *Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for Pre-K - 12*--as referenced in the Executive Summary, pg. 4, of "Maryland Early Learning Standards Birth - 8 Years."

Public Library Examples/Resources by Outcome

Lifelong Learning

Outcome 1: The information literate individuals will have the ability to navigate the constantly changing information environment.

State Library Resource Center
Public Programming Catalog; programs sponsored by SLRC staff for Maryland public libraries
http://www.slrc.info/services/Default.aspx?id=7040

Examples:
Fake News
Finding Health Information Online
Google Mostly
Researching Controversial Issues

Outcome 3: The information literate individuals will develop a strategy for evaluating information for clarity, validity, and usefulness from traditional and unfiltered sources.

http://www.prattlibrary.org/research/tools/index.aspx?cat=90&id=4735

Emergent Literacy

Outcome 1: Caregivers of emergent literate children will understand the importance of early learning programs.

Family Literacy Programming (Harford County)

Print Concepts: Connecting Books with Learning

[Communication/How to Talk and Share](#) [VIEWS2 Resource Page](#)	

Outcome 2: The emergent literate child demonstrates early learning literacy skills (e.g. singing, talking, reading, writing, playing, active listening, active engagement in rhymes, familiarity with alphabet, sounding).

[Children and Libraries article](#)

[Alphabetic Tip Sheet](#)

[Blank Tip Sheet](#)

[Views2 Resource Page](#)

Public Library Informational Resources

Lifelong Learning

Dean, Margaret	The Role of Public Libraries in Promoting Information Literacy http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~mhd27/eport/artifactdocuments/bibliography.pdf	Annotated bibliography
Nielsen, Bo Gerner Borlund, Pia	Information Literacy, Learning and the Public Library http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0961000611408643	Danish experience with extensive general Information Literacy bibliography
Farkas, Meredith	Information Literacy Toolkits https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/05/01/information-literacy-toolkits/	Toolkits
Muller, Karen	Information Literacy; unlocking the framework https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/11/01/information-literacy-framework/	Bibliography

Emergent Literacy

Campana, Kathleen, et al.	*Supercharged storytimes: An Early Literacy Planning and Assessment Guide*. ALA Editions, 2016.	Easy to use techniques based on groundbreaking research
Czarnecki, Elaine, et al.	*Every Child Ready to Read -- Toolkit for Serving Early Childhood Educators*. ALSC & PLA, 2017.	Early childhood education for public library staff
Maryland State Department of .Education, 2017.	*The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework Toolkit: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children.*	Collaborative support for all educators and providers implementing the goals of the *Family Engagement Framework*
ALSC & PLA, 2011.	*Every Child Ready to Read*. Second ed.	For parents and caregivers to support early childhood development
Maryland State Department of Education, 2010.	*Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth Through Three Years of Age: Every Baby, Every Child.*	Tools and activities to help caregivers, parents, and teachers
Herb, Steven.	"Preschool Education Through Public Libraries." *School Library Media Research*, vol. 4, 2001.	Seminal research as part of the Assessment of the Role of School and Public Libraries in Support of Educational Reform, 1998-2000
Information School, University of Washington.	VIEWS2: Valuable Initiatives in Early Learning that Work Successfully.	Project VIEWS2 cutting edge research in support of early learning initiatives of public librarians

Lopez, M. Elena, et al.	*Public Libraries: A Vital Space for Family Engagement*. Harvard Family Research Project, 2016. *Harvard Family Research Project*, www.hfrp.org/librarycta.	Paper exploring critical role families and libraries play in childhood learning
Maryland State Department of Education, 2016.	*Maryland Accreditation Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs.*	Revised accreditation standards for public and non-public programs
Maryland State Department of Education, 2016.	*Maryland Early Learning Standards, Birth - 8 Years.*	Executive Summary provides examples from the standards of each content areas
Readiness Matters! The 2014-2015 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report. Ready At Five, 2016.	*Maryland State Department of Education*, https://www.readyatfive.org/school-readiness-data/readiness-matters-2017/1302-maryland-s-2016-2017-kindergarten-readiness-assessment-report-executive-summary/file.html Testing/ReadinessMatters2014-2015.pdf. Accessed 2015.	Data from the KRA (The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) testing knowledge skills and abilities at school entry
Stoltz, Dorothy, et al.	*Every Child Ready for School: Helping Adults Inspire Young Children to Learn*. American Library Association, 2013.	Stoltz, Carroll County Public Librarian led the successful Early Literacy Training research study

Public Library Definitions

Early Literacy Skills -- The second edition of Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® defines the five early literacy skills as: reading, writing, talking, singing, and playing. (<u>Every Child Ready to Read</u>).

Emergent Literacy -- During early speech and language development, children learn skills that are important to the development of literacy (reading and writing). This stage, known as emergent literacy, begins at birth and continues through the preschool years. Children see and interact with print (e.g., books, magazines, grocery lists) in everyday situations (e.g., home, in preschool, and at daycare) well before they start elementary school. (<u>American Speech-Language-Hearing Association</u>).

Every Child Ready to Read -- Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® (ECRR) is a parent education initiative. It stresses early literacy begins with the primary adults in a child's life. The Public Library Association (PLA) and Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) concluded that public libraries could have an even greater impact on early literacy through an approach that focused on educating parents and caregivers. If the primary adults in a child's life can learn more about the importance of early literacy and how to nurture pre-reading skills at home, the effect of library efforts can be multiplied many times. Teaching parents and other caregivers how to support the early literacy development of their children is the basis of Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library®. When the first edition of ECRR was introduced in 2004, the focus on educating parents and caregivers was a significantly different approach for many libraries; one that certainly has proven its value. The updated and expanded second edition of Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® provides a new curriculum and materials to continue the effort, supporting parents and caregivers with the early literacy development of their children birth to age five. (<u>Every Child Ready to Read</u>).

Family Engagement -- Family engagement is a shared responsibility of families, schools and communities for student learning and achievement; it is continuous from birth into the school-age years; and it occurs across the various early care and learning settings where children are. (<u>Maryland State Department of Education, Early Childhood Division</u>).